

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 396 786

JC 960 413

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TITLE A Step Toward Success.
INSTITUTION Mayland Community Coll., Spruce Pine, NC.
PUB DATE 96
NOTE 23p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Planning; *Community Colleges; *Orientation Materials; Program Development; Program Effectiveness; *School Orientation; *Student Adjustment; Student Participation; Student Personnel Services; Student School Relationship; Teaching Methods; Two Year Colleges

IDENTIFIERS *North Carolina

ABSTRACT

Mayland Community College, in North Carolina, established the following five goals for enhancing its 1995 fall orientation program: providing information about the infrastructure of the college, connecting students with faculty and staff, connecting students with other students, communicating college-level expectations, and inspiring students. To achieve these goals, the college developed the following strategies for the 5-hour orientation: (1) the use of a decorative wall containing inspirational quotations at the entrance to the program; (2) a check-in session with background music and refreshments for socializing; (3) a presidential welcome to and vice-president's introduction of the orientation; (4) 10-minute informational breakouts before and after lunch for small groups of students, providing information on campus life from continuing students, career planning, financial aid, job placement and college-work study, student organizations, the bookstore, study skills and college expectations, registration, and student services; and (5) a closing session that included prizes and a motivational speech. Student evaluations of the orientation were extremely positive, with no negative comments being received. A complete 1995 winter orientation program is appended, including checklists of information points related to job placement, student life, financial aid, and career planning and counseling; a registration guide; a college phone list; and campus maps. (TGI)

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A Step Toward Success

by
Mark D. Milliron
and
the Mayland Community College Orientation Team
Mayland Community College
Spruce Pine, North Carolina

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A STEP TOWARD SUCCESS

Mark D. Milliron and the Mayland Community College Orientation Team

We began conceptualizing the 1995 Mayland Community College fall orientation program with our orientation planning team asking the question, "what outcomes do we have in mind when we think about new student orientation?" After much discussion and some lively brainstorming, we decided on a set of five goals/outcomes for this year's orientation. Each of these goals has been demonstrated in research and practice as essential to the success of community college orientation programs:

Provide information about the infrastructure of the college

Connect students with faculty and staff

Connect students with other students

Communicate college-level expectations

Inspire students, giving them a willingness and eagerness to try

We used these desired outcomes to guide us in taking the next step of devising strategies for our orientation session. Finally, after further discussion and exploration of alternatives, our team developed the following orientation programming in hopes of realizing each of our stated goals. Our overarching intention was to weave outcome-maximizing strategies into the fabric of the 1995 orientation program, providing Mayland Community College students the best possible entry into their new educational experience. All of this preparation resulted in the Step Toward Success program.

The Program

The program began with the students entering the music-filled student commons which had been preset for this five-hour orientation program. Part of the decorations included four walls along the entrance to the commons which were covered with inspirational quotations—the "Quote Walls." The orientation team placed a campus-wide call for quotations or sayings that were personally meaningful to employees and that they would like to share with the new students. Individuals were then asked to "dress up the quote" (i.e., print it with a decorative lay-out) and turn it in for inclusion on the quote wall. After the students made their way through the quote-filled hallway (which a number of students asked us to leave in place throughout the quarter), the students were greeted by faculty and staff wearing MCC-brand attire, given an orientation packet and a name tag, and provided some initial refreshments.

The check-in session lasted a half-hour, with the background music and refreshments providing a nice atmosphere for initial socializing. College employees involved with orientation were asked to introduce themselves to and meet with as many new students as they could during this time. The vice president of student services then convened the session and introduced the president, who gave an opening message welcoming the new students to the college. After the presidential welcome, the vice president introduced the goals for the orientation and overviewed the procedures for the next event, the informational scavenger hunt.

Students were asked to assemble in 11 separate groups of 10-13 students each. The grouping was guided by numbers on student name tags. Students with common numbers assembled with faculty and student guides (assigned to each different numbered group) who were stationed around the student commons. The first goal was for the students to be introduced to these faculty members and students. The faculty and student guides then oriented the new students on their campus maps included in the orientation packets and walked the group to their first informational breakout.

Informational breakouts (eleven in all) were stationed throughout the campus and led by faculty, staff, and administrators. Each breakout lasted ten minutes and was intended to impart the essential information surrounding a given topic or area while simultaneously working to effect the orientation goals of articulating expectations and inspirations. Fun and functionality were the foci for all the breakout leaders. Informational breakouts and their leaders for the 1995 Orientation were as follows:

***Student to Student** (led by current students talking to the new students about campus life)*

***Career Planning and Placement** (led by the director of career services)*

***Financial Aid** (led by the coordinator of financial aid)*

***Job Placement/College Work-study** (led by the coordinator of employer relations)*

***Student Organizations** (led by the current presidents of the student government association and Phi Theta Kappa)*

***S.O.A.R. Program** (led by the director of student support services)*

***Bookstore** (led by the director of the bookstore)*

***Study Skills and College Expectations** (led by the associate vice president of academic services)*

***Registration** (led by the registrar)*

***Handbook/Student Services** (led by a counselor)*

Library/LRC (led by the director of the LRC)

Each breakout session leader provided an informational checksheet (see attached) for the student's orientation packet. The sheet had key information blanks that the students had to fill in during the breakout group. We realized that only the essentials could be covered in the ten minutes allotted for the session; however, we tried to communicate important basics and connect the student with a contact person and area. The checksheet provided a focal point to gather information and pointed the student to the essentials of a given session. After each student filled in the blanks and completed the ten-minute session, the leader initialed each student's checksheet page.

During the breakouts, the faculty and student guides rotated forward to the next station. Because of this rotation, each time the student groups emerged from the breakout session, they had to meet a new faculty member and a new current student to begin the trek toward the next information session—creating even more connections to the college. This process continued until the sixth informational breakout after which the students reassembled in the student commons.

The student commons was set for lunch and again had background music playing. Our goal was to encourage even more social interaction during this time. Near the conclusion of the Pizza Hut- and Arizona Iced Tea-sponsored lunch, the vice president of academic services welcomed and briefly addressed the group. After this, the vice president of student services again directed the groups to reassemble for the remaining (five) informational breakouts. The students grouped with faculty and student guides who once more led them to their respective informational breakouts.

After the final breakout session, the large group reconvened in the student commons for the closing session. Orientation team members were waiting at the door to welcome the students back and to check the initials on student orientation packets as they entered the room. Students with initials on all checksheets—which signified that they gathered all the necessary information—were asked to place their name tags in a large bag to be used in drawing the names of prize-winners. In the closing session, the prizes were handed out (e.g., dinners for two at local restaurants, a special parking space, MCC clothing) and then a closing message was delivered by the vice president of student services called the "Making AAA's in College and Beyond" This was a 25-minute, motivational, steps-to-success type of message meant to wrap up the orientation with a BANG! After this final message, we again reminded the students of the orientation goals mentioned in the beginning. We asked the students to take out four post-it notes that we had inserted in their packets and to use them to "tell us how we did and what we could do better." We asked the students to place these post-its on an evaluation wall that was located on the way out of the student

commons. Once the orientation program was complete, we encouraged students to meet with faculty in different program areas and ask them to contact the leaders of the breakouts to gather more information.

What follows is our agenda/time table for this orientation program for both day and night sessions. The night orientation was simply a shortened version of the day session without the lunch session in the middle.

Day Orientation

8:30 - 9:00 a.m.	Check-in and packet distribution
9:00 - 9:05 a.m.	Presidential welcome
9:05 - 9:15 a.m.	Overview of day's activities and directions
9:15 - 11:00 a.m.	Informational breakouts
11:00 - 11:45 a.m.	Lunch — Vice Presidential welcome
11:45 - 1:15 a.m.	Informational breakouts
1:15 - 1:25 a.m.	Reassemble, collect name tags
1:25 - 2:00 a.m.	Closing session

Night Orientation

5:30 - 6:00 p.m.	Check-in, welcome, and directions
6:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Informational breakouts
9:10 - 9:30 p.m.	Closing session

Outcomes

The outcomes of the evaluation were extremely positive. To our surprise, we had no negative comments about the orientation process at all—even after a five hour program! Some of our favorite comments were as follows:

"You really boosted my confidence! Believe me, I really needed it; my confidence was really low,"

"Very caring."

"This orientation was very helpful and I had fun! Thanks for coordinating such a wonderful day"

"I can tell a lot of hard work was put into this. Thanks so much. The program was very interesting, organized, and exciting."

and our personal favorite:

"What a nice way to greet new students! Thank you for making us feel wanted and respected. I believe I'm going to love being a student here!"

The orientation team (made up of a broad cross-section of staff, faculty, and continuing students) devoted a great deal of time and effort to this program, striving to design and deliver the most effective orientation possible. We were committed to creating a value-adding orientation process resulting in students being well prepared to begin their studies at Mayland Community College. We are currently planning (1) a cohort performance study and (2) mid-semester and post-semester new student focus groups to collect data about students who went through orientation and to determine/ask how well the orientation prepared them for MCC studies. Initial reports from faculty include comments on how noticeably more prepared the orientation students are in comparison to the non-orientation students during the first few days of class. Our most sincere hope is that as we refine this program and move toward required orientation, all of our new students will be well served by the Steps to Success program. And, in conclusion, we hope that you might find the description of the orientation useful in your colleges as well.

Mayland Community College Presents

1995 WINTER ORIENTATION

***A Step Toward
Success!***



1995 Winter Orientation Informational Breakouts

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JOB PLACEMENT

Place a check mark in the box next to each statement after you have (1) obtained the information necessary to answer the question or (2) responded to the directions.

- ☐ 1. What is the Hidden Job Market?

- ☐ 2. What are the three elements required for obtaining a good job?

- ☐ 3. What is the name of the ESC advisor and the Job Locator?

- ☐ 4. Obtain ESC registration card and Job Locator business card.

STUDENT LIFE

Place a check mark in the box next to each statement after you have (1) obtained the information necessary to answer the question or (2) responded to the directions.

- ☐ 1. What techniques have helped students be successful at MCC?
- ☐ 2. List two possible hurdles you might face during the school year.
- ☐ 3. Ask for a "Persistence" bookmark..
- ☐ 4. What are the names of the presenters in this session?

PHI THETA KAPPA

- ☐ 1. What are the GPA requirements for induction into PTK?
- ☐ 2. What are some of the annual events or activities that PTK sponsors?
- ☐ 3. What is the name of a PTK representative at Mayland?

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

- ☐ 1. What is the purpose of SGA?
- ☐ 2. What are the requirements to hold office?
- ☐ 3. What is the name of the 1995/1996 SGA President?

STUDENT NURSES ASSOCIATION

- ☐ 1. What are the requirements for SNA?
- ☐ 2. What are some of SNA's activities?

S.O.A.R. PROGRAM

Place a check mark in the box next to each statement after you have (1) obtained the information necessary to answer the question or (2) responded to the directions.

☐ The purpose of the S.O.A.R. program is:

☐ Three ways to qualify for services are:

☐ Where should I pick up an application for services if I think I may need some help?

☐ Two services that S.O.A.R. offers which I am interested in are:

☐ Pick up a list of workshops/events for Winter Quarter.

FINANCIAL AID

Place a checkmark in the box next to the item after each topic has been reviewed.

- ☐ To be considered for any Federal Financial Aid, you must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

It is best to complete the FAFSA before March 15.

- ☐ When you/your parents file 1995 tax forms, make copies of the 1040 and keep copies of the W-2 forms.

- ☐ Scholarship applications must be completed by July 15.

- ☐ Financial aid consists of: Pell Grants, Federal Family Educational Loans, College Work-Study, State Incentive Grants, the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG) and Scholarships.

- ☐ The Person to contact for College Work-Study is Greg Ledford, Room #157 in the MCC Administration Building.

- ☐ 65% of MCC students receive some kind of financial assistance to attend college.

- ☐ The average cost of tuition, fees and books for a full-time student at MCC is \$425 per quarter.

- ☐ I may qualify for more than one type of financial aid.

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER (LRC)

Place a checkmark in the box next to the item after you have completed each activity.

☐ Introduction of LRC Staff members

☐ Walking tour of LRC

☐ Do' and don'ts in the LRC - ALWAYS ASK FOR HELP!

☐ Find patron registration forms

CAREER PLANNING/COUNSELING

Place a check mark in the box next to each statement after you have (1) obtained the information necessary to answer the question or (2) responded to the directions.

- ☐ 1. What is the name of the computerized career development program?

- ☐ 2. What is the name of the career counselor?

- ☐ 3. When should a student begin the career planning process?

- ☐ 4. Pick up a Career Services Brochure.

REGISTRAR

Place a checkmark in the box next to the item after you have completed each activity.

- ☐ 1. Obtain registration form.
- ☐ 2. Obtain drop-add form.
- ☐ 3. Obtain change of data information form.
- ☐ 4. Get a treat.

1995 REGISTRATION GUIDE

Pre-Registration For Upcoming Quarters

Two days during the current quarter will be designated as pre-registration days for the upcoming quarter. To pre-register you will need to:

1. Meet with your advisor to complete your schedule for the upcoming quarter during advising week. The week before pre-registration is designated as advising week.
2. During the two day pre-registration period, bring your completed registration form to the Registrar's office for processing.
3. Take printed registration form to the Cashier's Office and pay tuition and fees or if you are not paying at this time, you will need to pay by designated date. If you are receiving a grant, you will need to leave your registration form and complete registration on the first day of class.

Open-Registration

The day after pre-registration closes, open registration will begin. You will be able to register for all curriculum classes from this day until the last day of classes. Open registration hours are: Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. -- 12:00 a.m., and Tuesday and Thursday from 4:00 p.m. -- 6:00 p.m..

Registration Day

1. Meet with advisor to schedule classes. Advisors will be located in designated areas. Advisors will have registration forms and schedule of classes
2. After meeting with advisor you will need to come to the Student Commons, find the Data Entry Area, and have your registration form completed. After receiving your printed registration form please check it for accuracy; if changes are needed, go back to the Data Entry Area.
3. After receiving your printed registration form, proceed to the Cashier's Office and complete payment of tuition and fees.
4. Proceed with Bookstore directions.

Schedule Changes (Drop-Add)

DURING the drop-add days (the first five days of the quarter) you may change your class schedule without academic penalty. You will need meet with your advisor for a schedule revision. Take Registration Revision Form to Registrar's office.

AFTER the drop-add days are over you will need to:

1. Obtain drop form from the Student Services or Registrar's office.
2. Complete the form and secure the necessary signatures.
3. Return completed form to the Registrar's Office.

It is very important that you officially drop a class if you stop attending the class or you may receive a failing grade.

Prior to pre-registration or registration, if there is a change in your student status (name, address, phone, major) you will need to complete a Change of Data Information form available in the Registrar's Office.

MAYLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

PHONE LIST

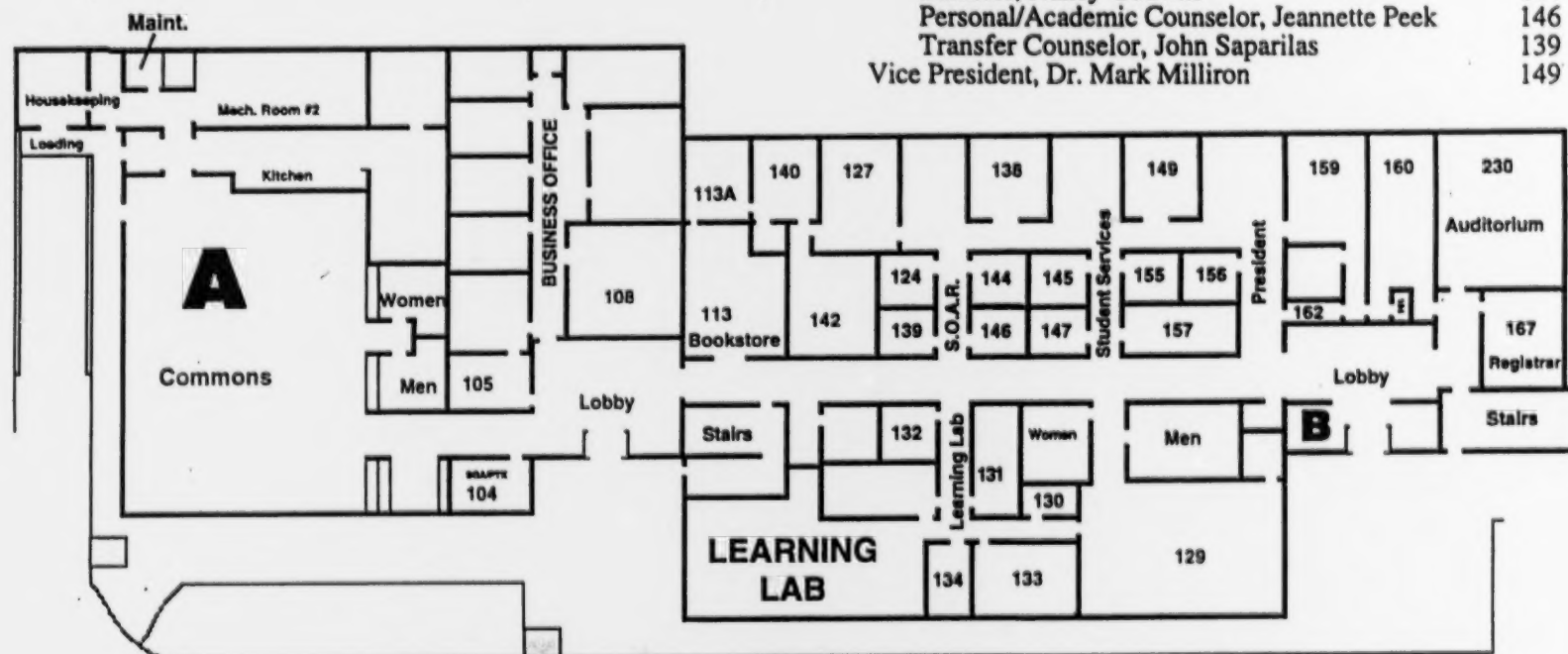
Please dial (704) 765-7351 and ask for the appropriate extension.

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Greg Ledford, Employer Relations Specialist	222
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Student Services:

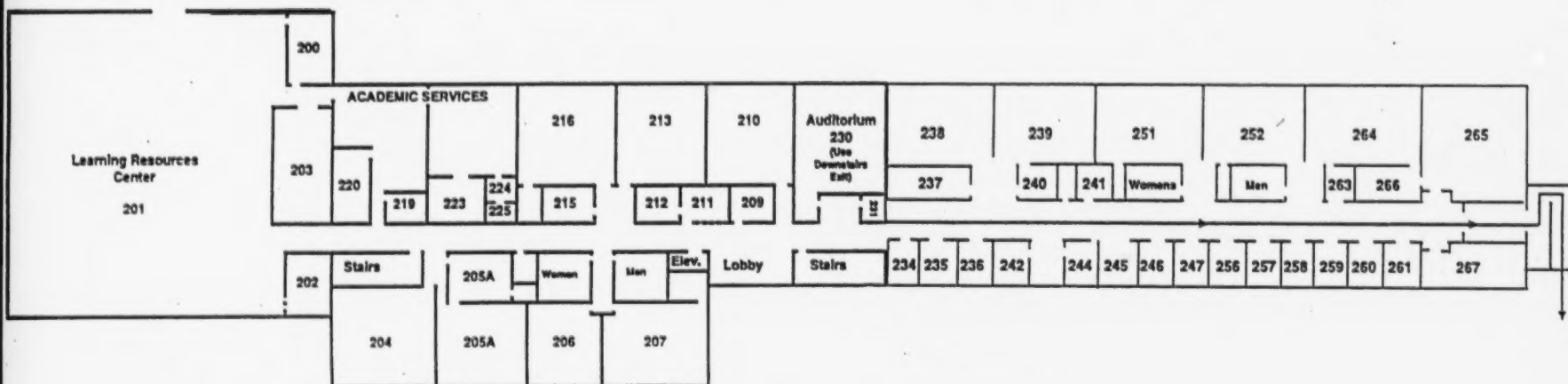
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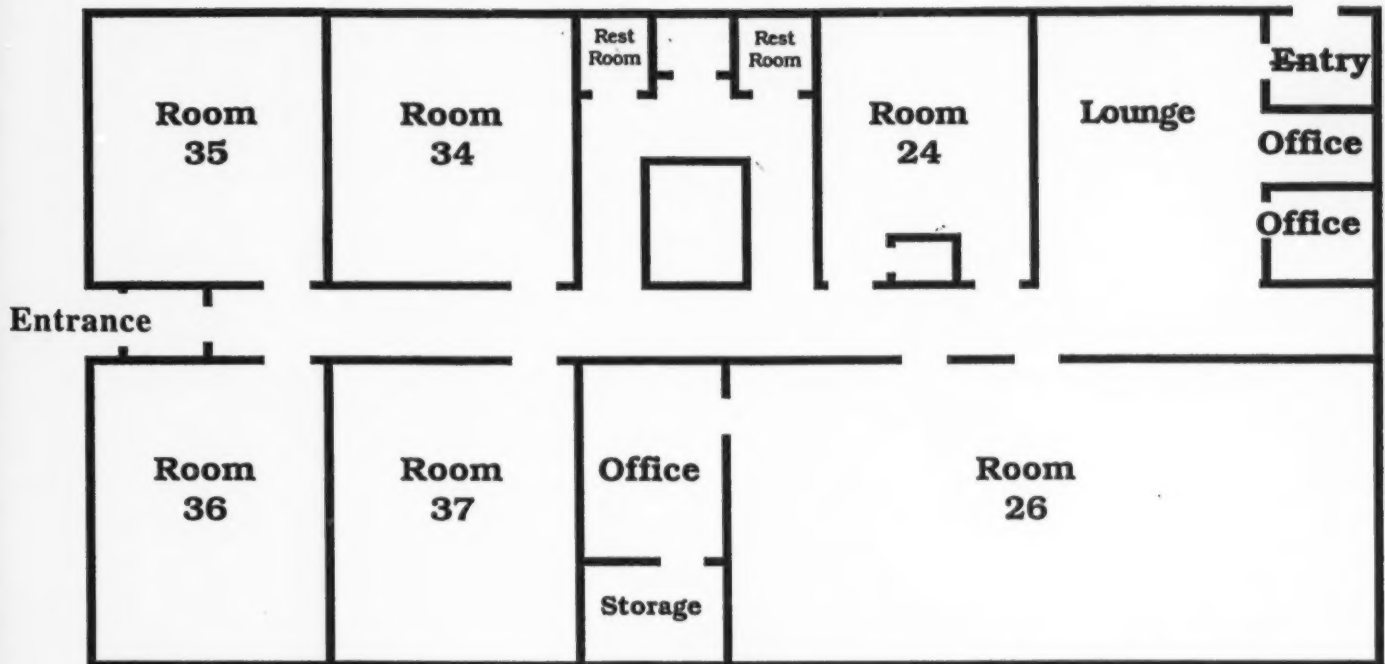
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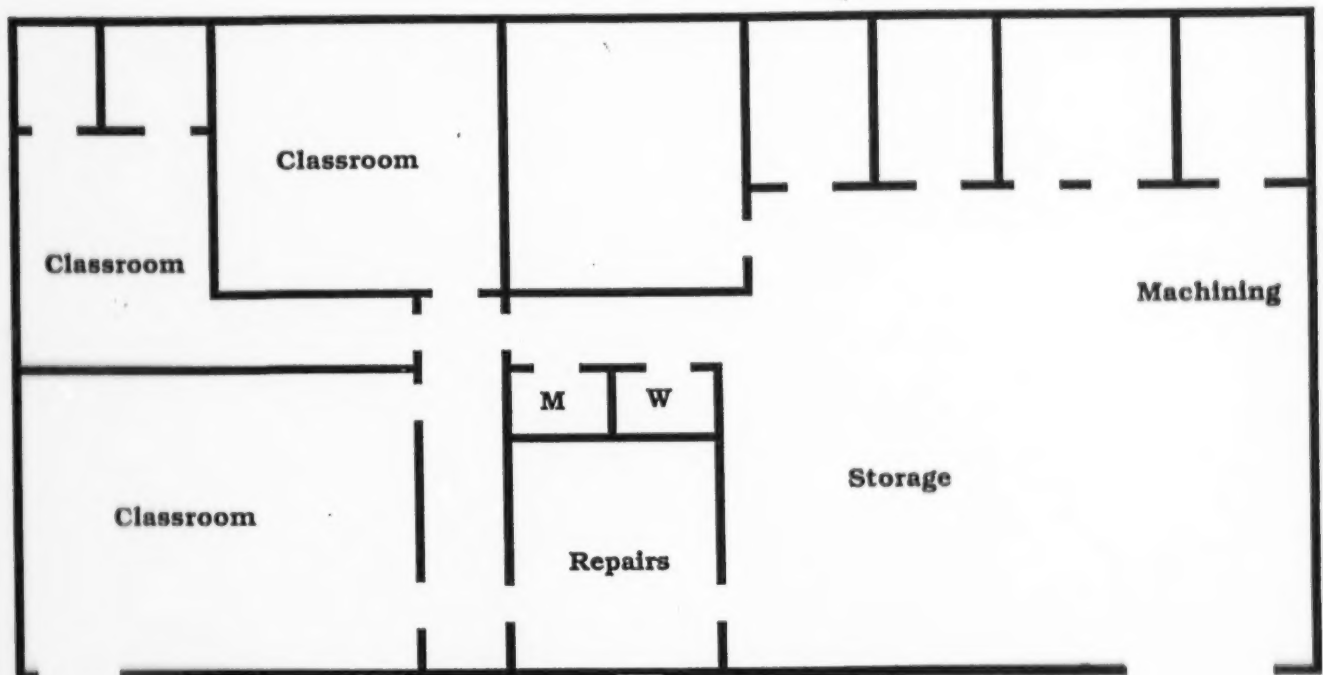
Administrative/Classroom Building Second Floor

Vocational/Solaronics Building

Cosmetology Entrance



Second Floor



Electronics Entrance

First Floor